

REMARKS

The present amendment is prepared in accordance with the new revised requirements of 37 C.F.R. § 1.121. A complete listing of all the claims in the application is shown above showing the status of each claim. For current amendments, inserted material is underlined and deleted material has a line therethrough.

Applicants appreciate the thoroughness with which the Examiner has examined the above-identified application. Reconsideration is requested in view of the remarks below.

Claims 19, 29 and 30 have been canceled. Claims 1-18 and 20-28 are pending in the application.

The only remaining rejections are under 35 USC 103.

Pursuant to a telephone conference with the Examiner, Applicants have amended claims 25-28 and it is respectfully submitted that these claims are properly allowable over Berbel and Matthews and further in view of Li and Squires et al.

At the outset, Applicants would like to point that neither Berbel nor Matthews refers to etching of the wafers and this is acknowledged by the Examiner. Further, the secondary references, which show etching, do not use a fluid interface as employed by Applicants. Li discloses a method and composition for cleaning oxides and metals on surfaces of silicon wafers in a two-phase liquid system, but as acknowledged by the Examiner, does not teach passing the article through at least one fluid interface claimed by Applicants. The silicon wafer is merely maintained in the upper non-polar organic liquid etching phase and metal ions are transported from the surface of the silicon wafers in the organic top layer to the polar bottom layer by diffusion. There is no movement of the wafer between

the phase interface of Li. This is an important feature of Applicants' invention which is not shown in Li.

Similarly, Squires et al. is directed to a die-phase stripping bath but the patent requires that it is essential to maintain a good dispersion of the solvent phase and the aqueous phase during the time the coated substrate is in contact with the stripping bath. There is no two-phase bath for which interface the wafer or other articles passed to remove contaminant particles from the surface of the article.

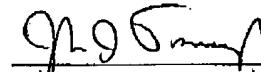
To further clarify Applicants' invention and distinguish the invention from the prior art, Applicants have amended claims 25-28. Firstly, the claims are now specifically directed to a wafer and not a workpiece. Wafers and workpieces are used interchangeably in the application as can be seen on page 1, the paragraph beginning at line 10 wherein industrial workpiece fabrication is equated with semiconductor wafer processing. Further, the claims are now directed to etching a layer from the surface of a wafer and not the removing of a surface contaminant particle. Basis for this amendment may be found on page 11, the paragraph beginning at line 15.

Accordingly, claims 25-28 are now directed to removing a layer from the wafer by etching using an etching fluid and at least one other fluid admissible with the etching fluid and having a different density. The wafer is positioned in the etching fluid to facilitate etching of a layer from the surface of the wafer and then the etching is terminated when the wafer is passed through the fluid interface and through the at least one fluid immiscible with the etching fluid.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 25-28 as now amended are properly allowable and further and favorable action is respectfully requested.

It is respectfully submitted that the application has now been brought into a condition where allowance of the case is proper. Reconsideration and issuance of a Notice of Allowance are respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner not find the claims to be allowable, Applicants' attorney respectfully requests that the Examiner call the undersigned to clarify any issue and/or to place the case in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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